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LETTER DATED 1 APRIL 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

As the representative of the State presiding over the statutory bodies of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of instruments adopted by the CIS Council of Heads of State in Moscow on 28 March 1997:

- Decision to expand the peacekeeping operation in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia (annex I);

- "On progress towards a settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia" (annex II);

- Decision to extend the length of stay of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in the Republic of Tajikistan (annex III);

- Joint statement on Tajikistan issued by the CIS Council of Heads of State (annex IV).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

Annex I

Decision to expand the peacekeeping operation in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Noting the important role of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces (CPF) in the conflict zone and of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) in stabilizing the situation, creating conditions to ensure the safety of refugees and contributing to a speedy settlement of the conflict,

Has decided:

1. To extend, at the request of the parties, the length of stay of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia, to 31 July 1997 or until one of the parties to the conflict expresses its wish to terminate the operation;

2. With a view to the further expansion of the peacekeeping operation, the fullest implementation of the tasks arising from the CPF mandate and the additional provisions to it, contained in the decision adopted by the CIS Heads of State on 17 October 1996 concerning the creation of conditions to ensure the safety of refugees in Gali district (within the old borders), to consider it necessary to expand the security zone as provided for in the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces of 14 May 1994.

To instruct the CPF command, in cooperation with the parties, to prepare, within one month, a plan for redeploying the Collective Peacekeeping Forces, and other measures relating to the organized return of refugees and displaced persons to that district;

3. To instruct the CPF command to take steps, in accordance with the plan, to improve the system of administering the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in the conflict zone, bring the Unified Headquarters closer to areas in which CPF units are deployed and improve coordination of the work of their staffs.

To approve the Russian Federation's proposals on the strengthening of CPF personnel by replacing a number of units currently in use by units that have been specially trained for peacekeeping activities;

4. To instruct the Council of Ministers of Defence of the States members of the Commonwealth to find ways of enabling specialists from CIS member States serving in the Collective Peacekeeping Forces to designate and clear minefields in Abkhazia, Georgia;

5. To instruct the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the CIS member States and the Council of Ministers of Defence of the States members of the Commonwealth, together with interested parties, to make the necessary amendments to the CPF mandate, bearing in mind the change in the situation in

the conflict zone, and to submit them in due course to the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth for consideration;

6. To instruct the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to inform the United Nations Security Council of this decision of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth.

This decision shall enter into force on the date of its signature.

DONE in Moscow on 28 March 1997 in one original copy in the Russian language. The original copy shall be deposited with the Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which shall transmit a certified copy to each State that has signed this decision.

For the Republic of Armenia

(Signed) L. TER-PETROSSIAN

For the Azerbaijani Republic

(Signed) H. ALIYEV

For the Republic of Belarus

For Georgia

(Signed) E. SHEVARDNADZE

For the Republic of Kazakstan

(Signed) N. NAZARBAEV

For the Kyrgyz Republic

(Signed) A. AKAEV

For the Republic of Moldova

For the Russian Federation

(Signed) B. YELTSIN

For the Republic of Tajikistan

(Signed) E. RAKHMONOV

For Turkmenistan

For Ukraine

For the Republic of Uzbekistan

(Signed) I. KARIMOV

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Annex II

On progress towards a settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Reaffirming their commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia,

Recalling the Declaration of the Lisbon Summit Meeting of heads of State of the members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), held in December 1996, which condemned "the ethnic cleansing resulting in mass destruction and forcible expulsion of the predominantly Georgian population in Abkhazia", as well as actions preventing the return of refugees and displaced persons,

Guided by the provisions of the Memorandum on the maintenance of peace and stability in the Commonwealth of Independent States, signed in Almaty on 10 February 1995, and the statement issued in Minsk on 26 May 1995 by the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth on overcoming the threat of separatism as the most important condition for ensuring stability in the Caucasus and settling the conflicts in that region,

Condemning the position of the Abkhaz side, which is hindering the conclusion of agreements on a political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, and the return, in dignity and safety, of refugees and displaced persons to their homes;

Notes that the measures taken in accordance with its decision of 19 January 1996 on a settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, have contributed to the marked revitalization of the negotiating process.

At the same time, disagreements on the solution of key issues involved in a settlement, including the definition of the political status of Abkhazia, Georgia, have not been resolved. The question of the return, in dignity and safety, of refugees and displaced persons to their homes has not been settled. Serious concern has been raised by the escalation of acts of sabotage and terrorism in Gali district; violations of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces of 14 May 1994 are continuing. The local population, refugees and displaced persons, and members of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces have been victims of terror and violence.

The Council of Heads of State declares that the States members of the Commonwealth:

- shall endeavour to reach, as soon as possible, a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, and an agreement on the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes;

- shall continue to carry out to the fullest extent the decision on measures to settle the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, adopted on 19 January 1996 by the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth, and shall strengthen the monitoring of its implementation;

- shall continue to give its full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

Expressing deep concern that the political and humanitarian problems engendered by the conflict have not been settled, the Council of Heads of State calls upon the States members of the Commonwealth and the international community to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the population and the districts affected by the war.

DONE in Moscow on 28 March 1997 in one original copy in the Russian language. The original copy shall be deposited with the Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which shall transmit a certified copy to each State that has signed this instrument.

For the Republic of Armenia

(Signed) L. TER-PETROSSIAN

For the Republic of Azerbaijan

(Signed) H. ALIYEV

For the Republic of Belarus

For Georgia

(Signed) E. SHEVARDNADZE

For the Republic of Kazakstan

(Signed) N. NAZARBAEV

For the Kyrgyz Republic

(Signed) A. AKAEV

For the Republic of Moldova

(Signed) P. LUCINSCHI

For the Russian Federation

(Signed) B. YELTSIN

For the Republic of Tajikistan

(Signed) E. RAKHMONOV

For Turkmenistan

For Ukraine

(Signed) L. KUCHMA

For the Republic of Uzbekistan

(Signed) A. KARIMOV

Annex III

Decision to extend the length of stay of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in the Republic of Tajikistan

The heads of the States parties to this decision,

Having regard to the appeal by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan for an extension of the length of stay of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan,

Guided by paragraph 2 of the decision on the establishment of collective peacekeeping forces and the commencement of their operation of 24 September 1993,

Considering the important stabilizing role of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in the Republic of Tajikistan,

Taking into account the positive developments in the inter-Tajik talks, which are being held under United Nations auspices and with the participation of observer countries, towards achieving national accord,

Have decided:

To extend the length of stay of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in the Republic of Tajikistan from 1 January to 30 June 1997.

DONE in Moscow on 28 March 1997 in one original copy in the Russian language. The original copy shall be deposited with the Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which shall transmit a certified copy to each State that signed this decision.

For the Republic of Armenia

(Signed) L. TER-PETROSSIAN

For the Azerbaijani Republic

For the Republic of Belarus

(Signed) A. LUKASHENKA

For Georgia

(Signed) E. SHEVARDNADZE

For the Republic of Kazakstan

(Signed) N. NAZARBAEV

For the Kyrgyz Republic

(Signed) A. AKAEV

For the Republic of Moldova

For the Russian Federation

(Signed) B. YELTSIN

For the Republic of Tajikistan

(Signed) E. RAKHMONOV

For Turkmenistan

For Ukraine

For the Republic of Uzbekistan

(Signed) I. KARIMOV

Annex IV

Joint statement on Tajikistan issued by the Council of the Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States

The heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) reaffirm their conviction that the Tajik conflict can be settled solely through political means, by an inter-Tajik dialogue based on consideration of the interests of all political forces and the entire population of Tajikistan.

In this regard, the heads of State note with satisfaction the highly positive impact on the inter-Tajik negotiations of the decisions reached during meetings between the President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, as well as the meeting between the parties held in Moscow in March 1997.

Noting the progress in the talks in recent months, they underscore the need for the full and consistent implementation by the Tajik parties of all existing agreements in the interest of achieving national accord in Tajikistan as soon as possible.

The heads of State call upon the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the international community, particularly the States that border the region, to continue their efforts to contribute to a political settlement of the Tajik conflict.

For their part, the States members of CIS will continue to promote the peace process in Tajikistan. In this regard, they note the important stabilizing role of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces in Tajikistan.

The States members of CIS intend to continue to provide economic and humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Tajikistan and to expand their bilateral and multilateral cooperation and interaction with it.

Moscow, 28 March 1997